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‘Classic rock’ comes to Iraq with 4th Inf. Div. Band’s newest specialty group

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Mary Mott
363rd MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Naming the group in jest – leader Staff Sgt. Brian Archer approaches most things with a tongue-in-cheek comment and a wry smile – is only one of the fun things about “Kathleen Turner Overdrive,” the 4th Infantry Division Band’s newest specialty music ensemble, an “old time” classic rock foursome playing memories from the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s.

Why yet another “specialty group” in a band – with a total of about 40 musicians and vocalists – that already had eight, one of them an 11-member rock band?

According to Archer, the band realized “there is a demographic that we were missing.”

During the band's first deployment to Iraq (in 2003), Sgt. 1st Class Aulio Marroquin, band operations supervisor from San Antonio, said that audiences "kept asking for classic rock" in addition to the music played by the standard contemporary rock band.

Although the idea of putting together the classic band was talked about for a couple of years, it only came into being about two months ago when the "chemistry" finally jelled.

Sgt. Bradford Bailey, from Las Vegas, is not only a guitar master but possesses an energetic and dynamic stage presence – putting heart, soul, and seemingly everything else, into his music. He is, in fact, the catalyst that finally brought the group together to begin performing, said Archer and Sgt. Luis Feliciano, bass guitar player and vocalist.

"Bailey has brought a level of rock unknown before in the Baghdad area of operations. His whole attitude is rock." said Archer.

Archer, a native of Columbus, Ohio, for all his zaniness both on and off stage, knows his stuff when it comes to playing drums. A solo by him on Led Zeppelin's "Moby Dick" will leave listeners feeling as breathless as if they'd been chased a couple of miles by a wildebeest.

In addition to his skill as a musician, Archer is also an electronic master and the "man behind the sound" of several of the 4th Inf. Div.'s ensemble groups, including the contemporary rock band.

Rounding out the group, Staff Sgt. Josh DiStefano, a keyboard player from Los Angeles, is a multi-faceted performer who can seemingly adapt himself to any musical style. DiStefano also plays keyboard for several of the specialty bands, including contemporary rock, jazz and "boogie" brass, and is a composer as well.

“It’s all about fun; it’s more about entertaining than being good,” said Archer. “We have a rule in our show that you are definitely allowed to have fun.”

“Clap; sing along; head-bobbing is preferred,” said Feliciano, a native of San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico.

“Most of the 4th Inf. Div. has seen the rest of the groups, so this is a new team,” added Marroquin.

“The motivation behind everything we do is so Soldiers can have some fun,” said Archer. A lot of Soldiers tell them the songs “bring back lots of (good) memories.”

If variety is the spice of life, the KTO quartet dishes it up.

“We kind of side track the audience and get them involved,” said Feliciano. “We ask for requests,” he laughed, “but then play whatever we want to.”

Selections stretch back as far as the ‘60s and into the Golden ‘70s and ‘80s, and include artists and groups like “Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, Madonna, KISS, Motley crew, AC/DC, Jimi Hendrix, ABBA, Neil Young ... or not,” according to Archer.

Units are invited and encouraged to call upon KTO to perform and can arrange this by calling the band hall at VOIP 242-4181 or 4122 and talking to one of the band operations sergeants, Staff Sgts. S. Chris Kerley or Troy Hascall.



DiStefano.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Rocking on Independence Day, vocalist and keyboard artist Staff Sgt. Josh DiStefano, from Los Angeles, is a crowd-pleaser July 4 at a concert held at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Members of “Kathleen Turner Overdrive,” the 4th Infantry Division Band’s newest ensemble, perform classic rock from the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s. Other members of the quartet are Sgt. Bradley Bailey, from Las Vegas, on guitar and vocals; Staff Sgt. Brian Archer, drummer and vocals, from Columbus, Ohio; and Sgt. Luis Feliciano, on bass and vocals, from San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mary Mott, 363rd MPAD)

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Bailey.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Sgt. Bradley Bailey rocks on at an Independence Day celebration July 4. Bailey, from Las Vegas, guitar virtuoso and vocalist with “Kathleen Turner Overdrive,” the 4th Infantry Division Band’s newest ensemble, kicks out classic rock jams. Other members of the quartet are Staff Sgt. Brian Archer, drummer, from Columbus, Ohio; Sgt. Luis Feliciano, vocalist and bass player, from San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico; and Staff Sgt. Josh DiStefano, on keyboard, from Los Angeles.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mary Mott, 363rd MPAD)